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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000436

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/28/2014  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MO](#)  
SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL OF PAM SUPPORT COULD JEOPARDIZE  
EL-FASSI GOVERNMENT

Classified By: Polcouns Craig Karp. Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) The beginning of campaigning for the local elections has been marked by a new controversy. Party of Authenticity and Modernity (PAM) Secretary General Mohammed Sheikh Biadillah announced May 29 that the PAM was withdrawing its support for Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi's minority government. The immediate cause was the PAM's dissatisfaction with a Ministry of Interior ruling, which has been only intermittently applied, to not allow members of Parliament who were elected on another party's ticket to run in the June 12 local elections under the PAM banner. Article 5 of the election code prohibits such aisle-crossing. The PAM, a party founded and led by royal confidante Fouad Ali El Himma, has essentially built itself up from scratch to become the largest political force in Parliament on the basis of opportunistic alliances and many instances of party-jumping. Biadillah's announcement appeared to contain some room for compromise.

¶2. (C) PAM Vice president in the Chamber of Deputies Hamid Narjisse, who also happens to be El Himma's uncle and one of his closest advisers confirmed May 29 to PolCouns the withdrawal of support. Narjisse added that while the PAM was withholding support, it had not made any decision about trying to actively work against or bring down the government, which he said it could do. He indicated that the PAM was continuing to negotiate and its actions would directly reflect any progress. He asserted that the Ministry of Interior, although a sovereign Ministry reporting directly to the King, was very much part of the government and at least to a degree, under the sway of PM El Fassi. Narjisse said that this government link for MOI was part of the ongoing informal democratic evolution in Morocco. He indicated, however, that PAM had decided to take the candidate eligibility dispute as far as it politically could go.

¶3. (C) Minister-Delegate of Economic and General Affairs Nizar Baraka and PM El Fassi's top adviser, including for Istiqlal party matters told Polcouns March 26 he expected a reshuffling of the government after local elections, depending in part on the outcomes.

¶4. (SBU) Party candidate lists for the Communal Council elections were due and frozen as of May 29 and campaigning was set to begin the next day.

¶5. (C) Comment: While not part of the government, the PAM has an announced policy of voting with the government and thus in theory, has been the sole force keeping the El Fassi cabinet in power. There are several parties in the opposition that are not really opposed to it, including the Berber-oriented Movement Populaire and several smaller formations. In a crunch, however, it would not be surprising that they would vote for the government in a vote of

confidence, though they might demand a price. This suggests that some kind of compromise is inevitable. We also cannot rule out that this whole dispute, the culmination of weeks of sniping back and forth, was part of an elaborate scheme to make the PAM look like an outsider in the elections, and to give the contest some air of excitement. End comment.

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